

### *Direct, Indirect and Cumulative Impacts*

There is a strong emphasis placed in NEPA documents on identifying and reducing potential effects of actions on the environment. The CEQ regulations (40 CFR 150.8) define several types of effects that should be evaluated in a NEPA document. Effects include “(a) Direct effects, which are caused by the action and occur at the same time and place. (b) Indirect effects, which are caused by the action and are later in time or farther removed in distance, but are still reasonably foreseeable. Indirect effects may include growth inducing effects and other effects related to induced changes in pattern land use, population density or growth rate, and related effects on air and water and other natural systems, including ecosystems.” As stated in these regulations, effects and impacts are used synonymously. Cumulative impacts are defined by the regulations as: “the impact on the environment which results from the incremental impact of the action when added to other past, present and reasonably foreseeable future actions regardless of what agency (Federal or non-Federal) or person undertakes such other action. Cumulative impacts can result from individually minor but collectively significant actions taking place over a period of time.” The FHWA will only mitigate for direct impacts, but must disclose any indirect and cumulative impacts. Impacts may include those resulting from actions which may have both beneficial and detrimental effects, even if the agency believes the overall effect will be beneficial.

For more information:

<http://ceq.eh.doe.gov/nepa/ccenepa/ccenepa.htm>